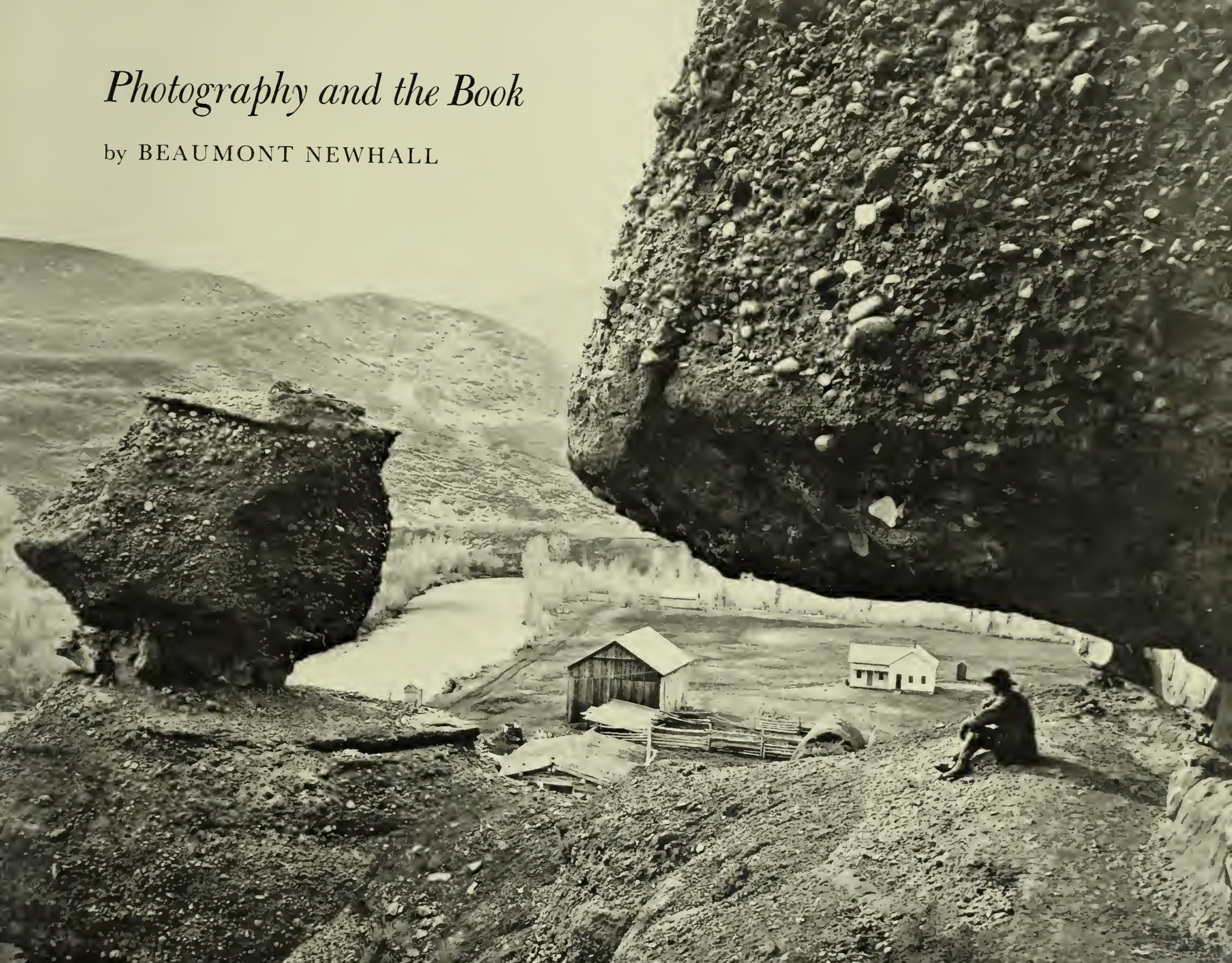


Photography and the Book

by BEAUMONT NEWHALL



THE MAURY A. BROMSEN LECTURE IN HUMANISTIC BIBLIOGRAPHY

This lectureship was endowed in December 1970 by the well-known Boston historian, bibliographer, and rare-bookman Maury A. Bromsen, as a memorial to his mother, Rose Eisenberg Bromsen (1885-1968). Its expressed purpose is "to invite a distinguished scholar to deliver a public lecture in the field of bibliography." The donor further stipulated that "the speaker ought to emphasize the humanistic rather than the descriptive character of his subject. The

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Photography and the Book



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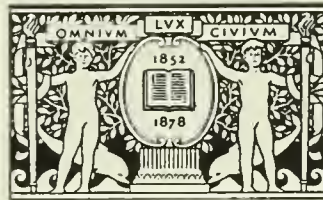
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Photography and the Book

PHOTOGRAPHY AND THE BOOK

by BEAUMONT NEWHALL

Delivered on the occasion of the eighth Bromsen Lecture, May 3, 1980



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FOREWORD

“Beaumont Newhall is justly regarded as the preeminent photographic historian of our time and has been one of the most influential personalities in modern photography.” This summation introduces the volume of Essays in his honor, 1975, to which many of the world’s leading authorities contributed.

Author, curator, teacher, and photographer, he was born in Lynn, Massachusetts, in 1908. He attended Harvard as a fine arts major (A.B., 1930; A.M., 1931) and did postgraduate study at the Universities of Paris and London. His alma mater conferred on him an Honorary Doctor of Arts degree in 1978.

Dr. Newhall’s museum career includes the posts of Librarian of The Museum of Modern Art, 1935–42, and Curator of Photography, 1940–45. He served as first Curator of the International Museum of Photography at George Eastman House, Rochester, New York, 1948–58, and as Director, 1958–71.

An inspiring teacher and lecturer, he has taught at the University of Rochester, 1954–56; Rochester Institute of Technology, 1956–68; and the State University of New York

at Buffalo, 1968–71. He has been Professor of Art, University of New Mexico, since 1971.

Twice named a Guggenheim Foundation Fellow, he is an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Photographic Society of Great Britain; a Corresponding Member of the Deutsche Photographische Gesellschaft; and a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

In his letter of acceptance Dr. Newhall indicated that he had done his first significant piece of research using the facilities of the Boston Public Library. And in the years since—according to a biobibliography published in 1971—Dr. Newhall has written more than six hundred books, exhibition catalogues, articles, and reviews. Among his major contributions to scholarship are the classic *The History of Photography*; *The Daguerreotype in America*; *Latent Image*; *Airborne Camera*; *Frederick H. Evans*; and, with his late wife, Nancy, *Masters of Photography*. The Boston Public Library is honored to present Beaumont Newhall’s present contribution to scholarship, *Photography and the Book*.

PHILIP J. McNIFF
Director and Librarian

S P E A K E R ' S N O T E

I am indeed happy to have been invited to come back to my native soil to talk about Photography and the Book. I certainly welcome the inclusion of photography in this series of lectures on humanistic bibliography. And I am particularly pleased that the Boston Public Library offered the invitation, because this is certainly one of the most distinguished libraries in this country, a library that those of us in the scholarly world have found extremely useful.

The piece of research that Mr. McNiff referred to in his introduction was a little different than the subject I am going to talk about tonight. It had to do with nautical history and the exact rigging of the square-rigged sailing ship *Aurora*, of which I was building a model. I was able to find in this Library's collection a description by Captain Ralph Forbes of the invention that he made of the double topsail which soon was replaced; only six ships were so rigged. It was very rare to find such material here. Also, later when I did become interested in photography I found the earliest edition in the Eng-

lish language of Daguerre's *Manual*, the first photographic text in the rich holdings of this library. It is included in the little exhibition that I hope you will all see at the conclusion of my presentation.

In regard to the exhibition, when I planned this lecture it occurred to me that it would be wise to pull from this library's holdings the books on the list that I had prepared for the purposes of my lecture. This Mr. McNiff has done, with his very able assistants, and lo and behold, we have a very exciting exhibition of *The Photograph and the Book* from 1839 up to the picture you see on the screen. This exhibition contains I think approximately three-quarters of the books that I picked ideally for this talk, which speaks so highly of the holdings of this library that I congratulate you all.

BEAUMONT NEWHALL
Boston Public Library
May 3, 1980

PHOTOGRAPHY AND THE BOOK

We cannot begin the subject, *Photography and the Book*, without a reminder of how photography was begun—in a very crude way indeed, by the Frenchman Nicéphore Niépce in the middle of France at Chalon-sur-Saône in 1826. Niépce was concerned with the graphic arts, especially with lithography, which had just been invented at the end of the 18th century by Aloys Senefelder, and which involved the use of costly, heavy, and awkward Solenhofen stones, a form of slate imported from Germany. Niépce thought that a way could be found of using metal plates instead. He relied for his experiments upon the sketches made by his son, and when the son went off to the wars in the Napoleonic period, the elder Niépce, not being able to sketch or draw satisfactorily himself, turned to the camera and conceived the idea of finding a way of capturing the image of the camera. This was a well-known optical instrument, but the thought of using it in the process we now call photography had not really been conceived, although it had been envisaged.

Niépce was able, by using a material well known to print-makers, the bitumen or asphalt preparation used as a ground for etching, to record photographically the camera image. He discovered that this material was light-sensitive, i.e., changed its solubility according to exposure to light. And he

exposed a pewter plate coated with his bitumen of Judea for twelve hours to produce a picture which we can hardly call a success (Plate I). It is a view from his window in his farmhouse in the village of Le Gras outside Chalon; it is looking toward the pigeon cote—you can see the tower on the right, and the other outbuildings. One reason why this is so imperfect is that the exposure lasted from dawn to sunset, and in the space of that time the shadows had moved and therefore had interfered with one another and destroyed the image. This very precious relic is now at the University of Texas; it was discovered by my fellow historian Helmut Gernsheim a dozen years ago in England.

But this is well known and well published. Perhaps less well known is this reproduction of a seventeenth-century engraving (Plate II). It was made by Niépce by the same process that I have described but without a camera; he simply waxed and oiled the original print, and used that, so to speak, as a negative, put it in contact with his sensitized plate, exposed it to light, and then, by dissolving away that amount of the bitumen of Judea that had not received exposure to light, laid bare grooves which he then proceeded to fill with etcher's acid, and thus produced an intaglio plate. I think that as you look at this print—and I make no claim for its



1 Nicéphore Niépce, *View from His Window at Le Gras*



II Nicéphore Niépce. Copy of an engraving of Cardinal d'Amboise by Isaac Brion

aesthetic merit—and compare it with the original print, you will agree that we have a very satisfactory use of the photographic process.

Nicéphore Niépce formed a partnership with Louis Jacques Mandé Daguerre, a very noted showman who had a theater without actors in Paris where people went to admire the scenery—fantastically painted 40- by 16-foot canvases or, more correctly, theatrical gauze, with images on both sides. By backlighting and then toplighting, one picture would dissolve into another. It was thus called the “diorama,” and was extremely successful. In order to create the absolute illusion Daguerre demanded, he made use of the camera as a drafting aid and soon began to work out a photographic process.

Learning of Niépce’s work, Daguerre eventually joined forces with him in 1829. Unfortunately, Niépce died only a few years after the partnership, and Daguerre went on alone.

By 1837 he had produced this still-life (Plate III). I think it is remarkable that in the space of eleven years the process had been improved to such a degree that we have a completely acceptable picture. Indeed the amount of detail that is contained is remarkable. We are able to enlarge the wicker-covered bottle to fill the screen, and still it holds together.

Daguerre attempted to sell his process to the public by the formation of a stock company, but before he had released publicity on this, the very brilliant French statesman and scientist François Arago, Director of the Paris Observatory and a member of the Chamber of Deputies of the government, convinced the Academy of Sciences that investigation should be made of this new process called the daguerreotype with a view of granting an annuity to Daguerre and the son of his late partner, Niépce. This was passed by both houses, and the

King of France signed the bill and directed that the invention should be disclosed to the public on the 19th of August in 1839.

All we need to know for the purposes of this lecture is that the daguerreotype was on a metal plate, not pewter as in the case of Niépce, but copper, plated with silver. It was made light-sensitive by the action of iodine. After exposure, the parts that had received the action of light became visible upon exposing the plate to the fumes of mercury. And the result was what the Bostonian Oliver Wendell Holmes, who was a great photo fan, called “the mirror with a memory.” It is truly a mirror—the image is a mirror image. If it is so viewed that a dark field is reflected, then the shadows appear dark. If on the other hand white is reflected, then it appears as a negative image of no real meaning. The daguerreotype was unique; it could not be reproduced except by copying and could not be printed on paper.

Daguerre showed the visitors to his studio his daguerreotypes, which were examined with a magnifying glass. What impressed them most, I think, was the fantastic amount of detail which the images contained.

News of the French government’s intention to investigate the daguerreotype came to England, and there a British inventor and scientist, William Henry Fox Talbot, was amazed because he had independently, with no knowledge whatsoever of Daguerre’s work, discovered a way of making pictures on paper by the action of light. His technique was utterly different from that of Daguerre. Instead of using metal plates and the fumes of iodine for sensitizing them and mercury for development, he used common writing paper which he made light-sensitive by dipping it first into a solution of common



III Louis Jacques Mandé Daguerre. *Still Life*

table salt (sodium chloride) and then into a solution of silver nitrate. In solution, the ions of silver united with the ions of chlorine to form silver chloride which turns dark upon exposure to light.

One of Fox Talbot's earliest successful pictures, made with the camera, is his very beautiful country home at Lacock Abbey, not far from Bath (Plate IV). I think you'll surely agree with me in looking at this picture that, in comparison, Daguerre's pictures were more highly detailed, and they certainly won public recognition to a degree that Talbot did not enjoy. But he had discovered a basic principle upon which all photographic processes today are based, the negative-positive system: the production in the camera of a negative in which the highlights are represented in silver deposit and the shadows in more or less clear areas from which an unlimited number of positives could be made simply by placing the negative on fresh sensitized paper, then exposing it to light.

Talbot also made pictures without a camera simply by placing objects, opaque and translucent, upon his sensitized paper and allowing the light to turn all the areas unprotected by the object dark. In this way Talbot got records that he used in his botanical studies, for he was a master of many sciences. He received his honors at Cambridge while an undergraduate for his work on the calculus; he became an avid astronomer; he was a linguist; and toward the end of his life he was translating Assyrian cuneiforms. When he died in 1877, the best obituary of this great man appeared in the *Annals of the Society of Biblical Archaeology*. Talbot's photographic process was almost at once linked to the printing press. The April 27, 1839, edition of *The Magazine of Science* carried on its front page three *Facsimiles of Photogenic Drawings*

(Plate V). The pictures were made by laying a sprig of Fool's Parsley, a stalk of Grass of Parnassus, and a piece of lace directly on boxwood blocks made light-sensitive exactly as Talbot made paper light-sensitive. An engraver then cut away all of the wood not darkened. To my knowledge, this technique lay fallow until the last half of the century, when "photography on the block" became a common practice. In our avidity to consider the original photographic print as the prime object of artistic value in photography we have overlooked this important use of the process.

Unlike Talbot's paper prints, which could be almost endlessly duplicated, Daguerre's metal plates were—as we have noted—unique.

The first daguerreotype image to appear in print was a lithographic copy of a view of the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris. The print, signed "L. Marquier, d'après une épreuve Daguerre," appeared in the trade journal *Le Lithographe* dated August 1839 to show lithographers the usefulness to them of the new invention.

The next step was to convert the daguerreotype itself to a printing plate. Josef Berres of Vienna discovered that the deposit on the daguerreotype of mercury amalgam was resistant to certain acids, and thus he could etch the bare areas of the silver plate and turn the daguerreotype itself into an intaglio plate that would hold, in a rather imperfect way, printer's ink. He published a view of the church of St. Stephen in Vienna. Similar experiments were made at the same time in France by Alfred Donn . In a caricature titled "Daguerr otypomanie," the artist, Th odore Maurisset, has drawn Dr. Donn  standing beside his printing press beneath a sign, "Daguerreotype Prints on Paper," and has somewhat gro-



IV William Henry Fox Talbot. *Lacock Abbey*

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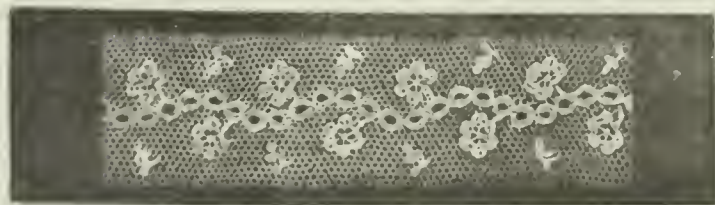
No. IV.]

SATURDAY, APRIL 27, 1839.

[PRICE 1½d.]



FAC-SIMILES OF PHOTGENIC DRAWINGS.



FAC-SIMILES

tesquely drawn, beneath another sign, "Gallows for Rent," the swaying bodies of those craftsmen who, in despair, have given up their lives.

But there was no need for such despair. The nascent medium of photography provided a lucrative and demanding market for skilled printmakers in conventional media. The first book publication I have to bring to your attention is a two-volume work with a hundred plates titled *Excursions daguerreiennes*¹ begun in 1840 and completed in 1842. Here is one of the plates, a view of the Cathedral of St. Jeanne d'Arc in Palestine, which has been converted to an Arabian mosque. This is an aquatint, hand-drawn from a daguerreotype. But I think you will agree with me that there is a quality, rather somewhat difficult to define, that we can call photographic. The daguerreotype from which this was made (alas, we have not found the original) was produced in the fall of 1839, and a few months after the daguerreotype had been introduced to the world in Paris. It was taken by a French photographer, Frédéric Goupil-Fesquet. Curiously, there was another daguerreotypist, Pierre Gustave Joly de Lothimière, who was sent to the Middle East by the publisher Lerebours. These two pioneer daguerreotypists of the very early period met in Egypt and voyaged up the Nile together. This view, taken by Goupil-Fesquet at Luxor, is a very strong graphic image (Plate VI), but still we are not yet getting pictures made by the camera on paper directly.

William Henry Fox Talbot offered one solution to this problem. He had so perfected his process that long exposures were no longer necessary. He devised the use of a second chemical preparation called the developer that made it possible to cut down the exposure time of the negative, but still



VI Frederic Goupil-Fesquet. *Luxor, Egypt*

the positive was made by the old slow process identical to the photogenic drawing. Here is a view of the printing establishment that he set up in Reading, England, around 1844. Those frames, those white squares that you see, contain the negatives. The paper that made use of the negatives was sensitized on one side only; the back of the paper was white. This was locked up in contact with the sheets and exposed to the sun, sometimes for hours, and then removed; and in the shade the process of toning them, making them chocolate brown in color, and fixing them and washing them took place.

It was here at this Reading establishment where we see not only the printing going on, but also the act of photographing a work of art, and you may wonder what that strange object in the lower righthand corner is. That is a technical device to check the focus of the lens. It is a four-part target; each quadrant is at a different distance from the lens, and each one is colored a different color, because lenses in those days did not focus the colors accurately. You focused and then looked at the print and noted what was in focus and out of focus and marked the lens position accordingly on the camera.

In 1844 Talbot began the publication of one of the great classics of photography, *The Pencil of Nature*.² This came out in a series of installments, paper-covered, between 1844 and 1846, with a text in beautiful, Victorian typography. Each installment had its title page printed in two colors, as you can see, “The Pencil of Nature” in red with a Latin dedication beneath it which roughly translated means that it is a wonderful thing to be the first to come to the land of Parnassus, a quotation from Virgil. (Talbot was a brilliant Latinist and

Greek scholar. His honors at Cambridge was for translating *Macbeth* into Greek.)

In this book—we’ll call it a book because the installments were intended to be bound together—he found it necessary to insert a slip of paper, which says, “Notice to the Reader: the plates of the present work were impressed by the agency of light alone, without any aid whatever from the artist’s pencil. They are the sun pictures themselves, and not some person’s imaginative engravings in imitation.” That of course is a direct reference to the contemporary publication *Excursions daguerreiennes*.

And now let us look at two of the pictures. First *The Open Door* (Plate VII). If this appears to be a rather pale print, it is because over the century and a half, approximately, that this print has lasted, there has unfortunately been a chemical reaction between the silver and the paper, and the adhesive used to fasten the print on the page, and the impurities in the page facing it. But, nevertheless, this is a very beautiful image and I prefer to show you something approaching the original rather than a modern, more brilliant print made by using high-contrast copy film. Talbot used this book as a demonstration of his invention, which he said he hoped would be brought to fruition by the aid of British talent, and it certainly is true that the British have probably done more to advance photographic technology than the people of any other country. *The Open Door* appealed to him because, as he said, to an artist anything can be a subject and he felt that this was an appropriate way. It was praised by the periodical *The Art Union* which noted that in the picture “Wouwerman’s famous broom is set at nought.” The reference is, of course, to



VII William Henry Fox Talbot. *The Open Door*

the Dutch seventeenth-century painter Philip Wouwerman—one of the many “little masters” then so popular.

The thing about this picture is that it’s ordinary, it’s not exotic, it’s not one of the most remarkable scenes in the world; no, Talbot took it right in his back yard.

Even more extraordinary is the next slide which brings us *The Haystack*. I can’t imagine anybody painting a haystack at this period, although later on in the Impressionism period we have Manet doing his endless studies of this subject. But to Talbot, in 1844 approximately, it was extraordinary that the camera could give us a representation of every straw in a haystack as easily as less complicated subject matter.

Talbot’s process was carried into France, and there it was greatly improved by two people: Gustave LeGray, who proposed waxing the negative to make it more transparent; and Louis Désiré Blanquart-Evrard, who only six years later increased the production of paper prints to a degree unheard of in Talbot’s *Pencil of Nature* laboratory. He had discovered developing out printing paper—which you photographers know requires only a short exposure—and the image, although invisible, is made visible by the action of developer.

A French poet and critic, Maxime Du Camp, made a trip to Egypt and the Middle East from 1849 to 1851 with his friend Gustave Flaubert as a companion. They traveled up the Nile photographing as far as Abu Simbel—that’s some 550 miles upstream, in an area little known and never photographed. They dug out of the sand these famous colossal statues of Rameses II in the rock-cut temple, which as you know has now been freed from the rock and moved several miles in order that the waters of Lake Nasser would not flood it when the High Aswan Dam was completed (Plate VIII).

A very handsome book³ was published with a varying number of plates, from 100 to 125, printed by Blanquart-Evrard from Du Camp’s paper negatives. We must remember that these books are illustrated with actual photographs pasted in; they are quite bibliographically irregular, because they were obviously printed up on order. It hardly would be profitable to take the immense amount of time to paste the pictures in unless people were buying them, and so some copies have 125 pictures, others only 100.

The most prolific of the travel photographers was Francis Frith. We are now at 1858; we have passed through a revolution in photographic technique. Talbot’s process and that of Daguerre have become obsolete; the glass plate has replaced the paper negative; collodion is now being used as the medium to hold light-sensitive silver salts to the surface of the plate, a process that led to beautiful results, as you can see from this slide made from an 18- by 20-inch photograph in the George Eastman House. But it was messy and difficult, because the photographer, even in the field, often at temperatures of 110 degrees, had to prepare his own plate, use it in the camera, develop it, all within the space of fifteen to twenty minutes.

Francis Frith returned to England. At Ryegate he established a photographic laboratory that must have been a marvel to behold, because he built racks to hold upwards of a thousand printing frames. These were placed on railroad tracks so that they could be pushed out into the sunlight, or back into a shed when it rained, and in England I guess they made use of that “railroad” quite frequently. The result is that he set up a manufactory for the production of photographs for publication. We could have filled the cases in the



VIII Maxime Du Camp. *The Colossus of Abu-Simbel, Nubia*



IX Portrait of William Sartain. Mezzotint engraving by Sartain of a daguerreotype taken by Marcus Aurelius Root

exhibition room and I could have spent this whole lecture period showing you the work of Francis Frith, it's so extensive and extraordinary. He owned thousands of negatives. Obviously one man did not make them all. Francis Frith became a publisher and a proprietor of a commercial establish-

ment with a corps of photographers who were sent throughout the world.

In America in the 1850's we find the daguerreotype to be the most popular form of the photographic portrait. Talbot's process had no room here whatsoever. Only a handful of photographers made paper prints until the advent of the collodion process. But daguerreotypes were made by the thousand. Statistics are rare, but the commercial census of the state of Maine, then not populous, announced that one and a half million daguerreotypes were taken in the space of eighteen months. A great many of these daguerreotypes, particularly of famous men and women, were published in books and magazines in the form of engraved or lithographed copies. Indeed, it is not unlikely that more daguerreotypes were seen in the form of these copies than in the originals. We art historians, steeped in respect for original works of art, tend to overlook this aspect of printmaking. I have chosen to show you one of these prints. It is a portrait of William Sartain (Plate IX), engraved by himself in mezzotint from a daguerreotype by Marcus Aurelius Root, who published it in his book *The Camera and the Pencil*.⁴ I rather like this portrait; I think it's a very spirited picture.

America picked up the collodion process a little later than Europe but excelled in its use. Indeed, the famous photographer Mathew Brady employed the Scotchman Alexander Gardner to teach him the new collodion process, and finally put him in charge of his Washington gallery. You know, Brady was a great entrepreneur; he managed three studios at the same time, and had a corps of photographers; and any idea that he made each picture credited to him, himself,



X Timothy H. O'Sullivan. *A Harvest of Death, Gettysburg*

is naive. He was a great director of an enormous enterprise which covered the Civil War.

I prefer, since we are discussing photographic books, not to show Brady's work—he never produced a book, to my knowledge, of the Civil War—but that of Alexander Gardner, who broke with Brady in the middle of the hostilities and set up his own gallery in Washington where he employed many of Brady's cameramen, including Timothy H. O'Sullivan. In 1865–66, following the war, Philp & Solomons of Washington published *Gardner's Photographic Sketch Book of the War*⁵ in two volumes, each with fifty splendid albumen prints from negatives produced by Gardner or for him.

This one shows us a typical photograph by O'Sullivan of the matériel of the war, the pontoons for bridge building. These men working for Gardner photographed every aspect of the war except the action. Some of the most powerful images were of the battlefields strewn with corpses—as in O'Sullivan's unforgettable *Harvest of Death* (Plate X). Oliver Wendell Holmes wrote of these photographs in *The Atlantic Monthly* that he thrust them in the bottom drawer of his cabinet as one would bury the bodies in the field.

Another enterprise which produced a handsome volume⁶ was that of George N. Barnard who traveled through Georgia with Sherman during his campaign. I might mention that happily this book and also the Gardner sketchbook have been reprinted and are available today for study, although the reprints hardly do justice to the originals.

This is the ruins of the railroad depot at Charleston, South Carolina, as blown up and left by the retreating Confederates (Plate XI).

Following the cessation of hostilities in the Civil War

O'Sullivan and Gardner and many others who had been toughened by field photography in the great combat went West with the railroad. This photograph of the Union Pacific lines, taken west of Cheyenne, was made by Captain A. J. Russell, who had served in the Civil War and whose photographs in that area we are just beginning to learn about.

Next is the extraordinary photograph *Hanging Rock*, along the Union Pacific.⁷ We have on exhibition here a beautiful print of this very photograph, large in size (it must be 10 by 12 inches at least), very precise, and very detailed (Plate XII). These pictures were made for the Union Pacific Railroad and published by them as propaganda to travel on the new railroad line.

Others followed. William J. Stillman from Boston, on diplomatic service in Italy and Greece, made some magnificent photographs of the Acropolis in Athens (Plate XIII) which were published in book form;⁸ and William Bradford, taking along two Boston photographers, photographed the Arctic regions. The book they published in 1873 is titled *The Arctic Regions; Illustrated with Photographs Taken on an Art Expedition to Greenland* by William Bradford,⁹ with "Descriptive Narrative by the Artist." It was published in London. It is the largest of all the photographic books—24 by 19 inches, with double-page illustrations now and then.

In 1873, on the United States Government expedition to the area now known as New Mexico and Arizona, the Southwest, Timothy H. O'Sullivan went along as the official photographer on the expedition, commanded by Lieutenant George M. Wheeler. There he made this memorable photograph of the Canyon de Chelly (Plate XIV), that great prehistoric monument lodged in the recess in the cliff in the



XI George N. Barnard. *Ruins of the Railroad Depot, Charleston, South Carolina*



XII Andrew Joseph Russell. *Hanging Rock, Foot of Echo Canyon, Utah*



XIII William James Stillman. *Eastern Facade of the Temple of Victory*



XIV Timothy H. O'Sullivan. *Ancient Ruins in the Canyon de Chelly, New Mexico*

Arizona area very close to New Mexico. This library owns one of these beautiful albums.¹⁰ The album was loaned to the Metropolitan Museum of Art for its show of this type of photography called *The Era of Exploration*.

I've included another picture, made on a previous expedition, of the Black Canyon of the Colorado River. This area, of course, exists now only in photographs; it's filled with the waters of Lake Mead, formed by the dam.

This drive for the West was documented with great care by these frontier photographers.

Now let's turn to portraiture of this period. In book form, the most important work is the twelve-volume *Album de la Galerie Contemporaine*,¹¹ containing portraits of illustrious French people, largely writers and artists. This memorable photograph of Daumier was taken by Nadar; and Nadar's friend and rival, Etienne Carjat, contributed this photograph of Charles Baudelaire to the *Album de la Galerie Contemporaine* (Plate XV). It is rather curious that Nadar was so close a friend of Baudelaire that he used the second person singular pronoun in addressing him. He also felt intimate enough with Nadar to ask for more than one hasty loan. It's rather ironic that Baudelaire had no use whatsoever for photography. He wrote:

If photography is allowed to supplement art in some of its functions, it will soon have supplanted or corrupted it altogether, thanks to the stupidity of the multitude which is its natural ally. It is time, then, for it to return to its true duty, which is to be the servant of the sciences and arts—but the very humble servant, like printing or shorthand, which have neither created nor supplemented literature.¹²

I do want to mention that these two slides that I have put

on the screen are examples of the woodburytype process (the man's name is Woodbury, and they added the "type" along the analogy of the daguerre-o-type). The woodburytype process is the most permanent and one of the most beautiful of all the ways to reproduce photographs. It so happens that a colloid such as gelatin changes its solubility in water when it is mixed with the chemical potassium bichromate, today more commonly called dichromate. If you simply mix a small amount of these orange crystals with gelatin and put that in the daylight for a little while, you would find it very difficult to dissolve in water. Gelatin, as you know, dissolves very readily in water if it's pure.

So you expose a negative to a piece of paper that's coated with bichromated gelatin. As a result, where the light strikes the paper—and with the negative you recollect that it's going to be the shadows—the area underneath is rendered relatively insoluble, and where there are highlights, the gelatin is readily soluble. You then wash this in ordinary warm water, and you have a microscopic relief map and record in relief of the densities of the negative. Then, if you press a piece of lead against the gelatin relief (this must be done in a hydraulic press under five tons per square inch of pressure), you will produce an intaglio plate on lead, a record of the highlights and the shadows. You then fill the depressions so obtained with a gelatinous ink of any color you choose (usually brown); then you can simply put a piece of paper over it, press it in intimate contact, and pull it away, and you have a beautiful impression.

This technique was usually used for copies of paintings or portraits, but we do have a beautiful book by John Thomson and Adolphe Smith, *Street Life in London*.¹³ It was published in



XV Etienne Carjat. *Charles Baudelaire*

London by Sampson Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington in 1877–78. (Incidentally, most of the books I'm talking about were trade books, not privately published but in the regular trade, and reviewed in most of the literary magazines.) This was a book of sociological nature that talked about ways that the British lower classes were making a living—the life of the London poor. It was based on Charles Mayhew's classical sociological survey of that title, *Life and Labor of the London Poor*. The illustrations were made, as far as we can tell, by John Thomson, who spells his name without a “p,” and the text was written partly by himself and partly by Adolphe Smith. Thomson spent a long time in China and made beautiful books and illustrations of that country; and he looked at London almost as if it, too, were a foreign country.

The next slide shows us *Workers on the “Silent Highway”*—that is, the River Thames. It's a picture that I've been very fond of (Plate XVI).

Now we'll make a jump in my summary list of books I consider of importance, to one written and illustrated by the physician Peter Henry Emerson. He was born in Cuba of an American father, but he was brought up in England and must be considered very much an Englishman. He was trained as a physician, but he abandoned the profession after an internship because of his love of photography; and he began to practice photography as an amateur (he fortunately had a private income of some sort) and produced a series of extraordinary books, illustrated with two different technologies. This *Gathering Water Lilies* is from 1886 and is one of fifty plates that are platinum prints in the book *Life and Landscape on the Norfolk Broads*.¹⁴ The platinum print makes use of the salts of iron for the light sensitivity. Light changes a salt from



XVI John Thomson. *Workers on the “Silent Highway”*

a ferric to a ferrous type, and in the presence of a ferrous salt, platinum salts are reduced to platinum. Platinum is the most stable of metals, and platinum prints are very beautiful indeed. Emerson's work was not only of technological interest, but aesthetic. He had two very strong beliefs: 1) one should photograph the real scenes, as opposed to producing the

many academic studio pictures or theatrically posed pictures that were popular at that period in England; and 2) a picture should not be sharp all over since our eyes do not see the foreground and the distance as equally sharp. As you will note, the water lily is quite sharp in its definition, but as the eye goes to the distant trees, they are very woolly and indistinct. This he called "naturalistic focusing," and he brought down the wrath of the whole photographic community in England, as he was a very harsh and evocative writer. My late wife Nancy's book on P. H. Emerson recounts in a very vivid way this "tempest in a teacup," as it was called at the time, of Dr. Emerson's theories of naturalistic focusing.

The last book that he did, in 1895, very happily this library owns: *Marsh Leaves*.¹⁵ It consists of only a few plates. These are photogravure plates made by Dr. Emerson himself; he actually produced them, etched the plates and pulled the prints, so this is one of the rarest of the books in the collection. This is a very beautiful example (Plate XVII); it seems to me that here he is absolutely justified in his theory of naturalistic focusing, and when you come to look at the print which is on display I think you will agree that this is one of the great triumphs of photography of this particular period, or the impressionism period in photography.

Thus far we have talked about reproductions and about several ways of illustrating books with photography — to make copies of photographs by manual techniques, to use paper prints themselves, to make reproductions by photomechanical techniques such as the woodburytype, and to make photogravures by a technique envisaged back in 1826 by Niépce. A copper plate is covered with that same bitumen of Judea that he used, and the exposure is made from a positive. It

results in a coating that can be dissolved away, leaving furrows that can be etched. But none of these techniques could be used with type; type is in relief, and these other techniques were in intaglio. Also, lithography—and we have not had sufficient time to go into that—was used. But the great *desideratum* was to find a way to reproduce photographs together with text, one operation through the press for the rapid production of pictures.

This is a photograph by Barnard from that same set that we looked at shortly ago. Notice the full scale of this picture, the details. And now let us see how it is reproduced in a magazine. This is a very popular American magazine, *Century Magazine*, an issue of 1887 and although the slide is rather dim and the scale is small, the larger picture in the middle is the artist's idea of how to sketch this photograph. Compare that with the picture here, also by Barnard, a photograph of General Sherman (Plate XVIII). This slide is made from a modern print; the original negative is in the Library of Congress. Notice that it is a rather casual composition. I cannot consider this to be a great photograph; the slide is a little dark, but you can see that the full texture is revealed. We are aware of the blanket on the horse, the general's stars, the harness, the ammunition guns behind. Now let us look at an illustration in *Century Magazine* for the same year, which is a hand-made wood engraving of the photograph (Plate XIX). At this period people were working out photomechanical techniques to produce a relief plate that would print together with type. And they solved the problem by introducing a halftone screen. A halftone screen simply breaks the tonal scale up into minute areas of black and white, and where black predominates you see a black tone; one is not aware of



XVII Peter Henry Emerson. *Marsh Weeds*



XVIII George N. Barnard, *General William T. Sherman at Atlanta*



XIX *General William T. Sherman at Atlanta.* Wood engraving from the Barnard photograph

the screen because it is so small. It is inconceivable until you look at this print through a magnifying glass that some wood engraver actually reproduced the halftone screen itself in this reproduction of the very photograph that we have just looked at.

This is the period of the great revolution in the graphic arts. We now find the demise of the wood engraver, and the triumph of the photoengraver. A classic work in sociology, *How the Other Half Lives*,¹⁶ by Jacob Riis, first appeared in 1890. A study of slum life, this book pointed out the evils of the slum and how it bred crime. The work of Riis came to the attention of Theodore Roosevelt, then Police Commissioner of New York, and the first clean-up of the lower East Side began. It is a classic work, illustrated by the author, with photography. Riis was a newspaper editor who had suffered from slum life himself on coming to America as an immigrant. He felt very strongly about the slums, and he began a crusade in words, but found them not strong enough, and so he learned photography. But how were they seen by most of the people?

The next slide is an artist's sketch made from a photograph by Riis. I have another slide of a very famous picture by Riis, just as it appears in this book. This was drawn by a very distinguished American sculptor, Kenyon Cox; and although the title page says it is illustrated with photographs taken by the author, when we look at this wood engraving we see "Drawn by Kenyon Cox from photos." That is an expression of an opinion unfortunately still held by a great many artists about the position of photography, which happily is being overcome.

This is the *Italian Madonna and Her Child*. It's a very moving

picture when one realizes that the whole family is living in this one room. Let us look at this next slide in comparison with a photograph made from the original negative which carries much more conviction and is much more direct.

I'd like now to jump to the end of the century, 1903, when Alfred Stieglitz, who had been working in photography since his student days in Berlin in 1885, began the publication of one of the most beautiful quarterlies that has been produced in photography, which he called simply *Camera Work: An Illustrated Quarterly Magazine Devoted to Photography*.¹⁷ It appeared in fifty issues between 1903 and 1917. The cover was designed by Edward Steichen.

The next slide brings us to the first page of Volume 1, Number 1, which carries the masthead *Camera Work*. It goes on to name the associate editors, the subscription price, the address, and so on, with a marqué designed by Steichen, CW (*Camera Work*). Those of you who are lovers of fine typography recognize this as typical of the work of the period of William Morris.

The magazine opened with pictures. There is a list of the photographs on page 3, and on page 5 are these extraordinarily beautiful photogravures by Gertrude Käsebier, *The Manger* (Plate XX) and *Blessed Art Thou Among Women*. These pictures were made in 1899.

Stieglitz reproduced one of his own photographs, *The Hand of Man*, in this first issue of *Camera Work* (Plate XXI). It is prophetic of his later work, for it celebrates the industrial aspect of America, as opposed to the more rural aspects of European life, or picturesque scenes of New York.

We go forward now. Alfred Stieglitz himself attracted a great many fine photographers including Alvin Langdon



XX Gertrude Käsebier. *The Manger*



XXI Alfred Stieglitz. *The Hand of Man*

Coburn, who did this fine picture of London Bridge which was published in his book on London¹⁸ with an introduction by Hilaire Belloc, published by Duckworth and Company in 1909. This is distinguished by the fact that Coburn, like Emerson, learned how to make photogravure plates and printed the plates on his own press. Note the Emersonian concept of focus—it's not a highly detailed but an impressionistic picture.

I have next another view from the book *London* of St. Paul's, with that very impressionistic plume of smoke in the righthand side.

I now would like to jump to the era of modern art and the impact of abstract art upon book making and photography. One of the earliest books of this type, published in 1926 by the publishing house Rudolf Mosse, was *Amerika: Bilderbuch eines Architekten* (*America: The Picture Book of an Architect*),¹⁹ with 100 pictures taken mostly by the author, Erich Mendelsohn.

We look up at the high buildings in New York that so impressed this European architect. He looked up at the buildings, he reveled in this view, a kind of new architecture. The abstract artist Alexander Rodchenko reviewed this book, and in great excitement he said, "It's a book that's so hard to understand, sometimes you must put it over your head to be able to see the pictures." It's hard to believe, today, that such kinds of pictures defied the conventional academic perspective that never should the camera be tipped, its back must always be vertical—otherwise the buildings are going to be too small at the top. There's no logic in this whatsoever, because our vision obeys the rules of perspective even when a plane is vertical.

Mendelsohn also showed us views that most of us had not even noticed of the grain elevators of the Midwest, buildings that were never recognized as architecture but merely as industrial buildings of a humdrum sort. But in them he found great visual delight.

We find in Europe this same appreciation. Albert Renger-Patzsch produced a book that was titled by the publisher, Kurt Wolff Verlag in Munich, *Die Welt Ist Schön* (*The World Is Beautiful*).²⁰ There are 100 photographs taken by this photographer. The title may seem rather obvious to us. He showed us the beauty of plant forms; he showed us the beauty of industrial forms. Just as Erich Mendelsohn showed us the grain elevators, so Renger-Patzsch shows us that blast furnaces are beautiful, that they're abstract. This was the time when abstract art dominated the European world, and it is as if Renger-Patzsch, or more literally his publisher, had titled the book *The World Is Beautiful, Get Out of the Studio and Have a Look at the World*. In 1929 a great exhibition was held in Stuttgart, *Film and Foto*: over a thousand photographs with the new vision. Several other books came out about the exhibition. I am choosing one only to share with you. This is by Werner Gräff, a designer, a Dadaist, a painter, an all-around artist who died only a few years ago. This exciting book is titled *Es kommt der neue Fotograf!* (*Here Comes the New Photographer!*).²¹ But who is the new photographer? We can hardly recognize that the picture on the jacket is looking straight down on a walking man. The spirit of the camera in motion was expressed typographically by Werner Gräff. This two-page spread is set up in the new style of typography (Plate XXII) made popular by Jan Tschichold of *sans serif*, grotesque type, but here we have an extreme because he has

Ach, die Renaissancemaler! Sie haben die seltsamste Verwirrung unter den Fotografen von heute angerechnet! Ihre Perspektivelehre! Wir wollen ja gegen eine exakt regelrechte Perspektive, wie diese, nichts einwenden



Stadtbild - Berlin

(außer vielleicht, daß sie ziemlich langweilig ist). Aber sie ist nicht alleingültiges Gesetz. Schließlich marschieren wir nicht immer mit kerzengerade gerichtetem Blick über die Straße



sondern meist so



Es ist nicht wahr, daß unser Sehen völlig gemäß der Zentralperspektive erfolgt. Praktisch wenden wir den Kopf wie wir wollen, und selbst wenn wir berücksichtigen, daß unser Gleichgewichtssinn uns dauernd bewußt macht, was oben und unten, was vertikal und horizontal ist, so kann uns das nicht verbieten, ein Bild mit einem Horizont zu nehmen, der nicht wagrecht ist



Parufemet

opened up the sentence and dropped in the photograph and closed the sentence. To the left we have a very pedestrian kind of view of a typical boulevard scene with the camera absolutely level, and underneath that he writes, “but we don’t walk around ramrod straight with our eyes always level at the horizon,” and he made this montage of people walking in that way; “no, we walk around looking up and down and around and about, and why can’t the camera look that way?” The picture at the bottom is Harold Lloyd who has lost his Model T Ford and has got only the crank left in his hand. His bewilderment is reflected in the tipping of the image. This whole spirit could hardly have been expressed in photography without the example of abstract art.

Rodchenko went as far as to write a stirring manifesto on this “new photography.” He called upon photographers to give up the “belly-button view” and get the camera up to your eye where you can look around and really catch the dynamism. ,

An approach similar to that of Werner Gräff was taken by the American photographer Francis Bruguière in the book *Few Are Chosen*,²² produced in collaboration with the film critic and writer Oswald Blakeson. The illustrations are photographs of cut-paper abstractions and double exposures placed in the text wherever the authors felt that a picture would explain the message better than a verbal description.

I’ve chosen for the 1930’s this extraordinary book by Ansel Adams that has long been out of print. It is his first technical book, called *Making a Photograph: An Introduction to Photography*.²³ It was published by the art house The Studio Limited in London in 1935. Curiously enough, it was from England

that we in New England—my photo friends and myself—learned about Ansel Adams and got very excited by his work. Because the book is illustrated in an extraordinary way, let’s turn the page and we come to the introduction by Edward Weston and a facsimile reproduction of one of Adams’s classic pictures of that period, a board fence. We had never seen photographs so beautifully reproduced. It was hard to believe, it still is hard to believe, that these are not actual silver prints. In spite of all the advances that have been made in photographic reproduction today, I challenge one to show me a reproduction of *Boards and Thistles* as beautiful as this. Part of the problem, as book publishing friends will tell me, shaking their heads, is that each and every illustration, printed on glossy paper, was hand-tipped onto the page in each book, giving a combination that is the height of excellence in a photographic book.

The next slide brings us to another picture, an extraordinary photograph of Carolyn Anspacher, a poet; and then we have next a double spread, one photograph by Adams of Yosemite, and one by the only person he chose to represent in this book beside himself—his friend Dorothea Lange. This picture of the Great Depression by Dorothea Lange, of the White Angel bread line, is a masterpiece.

Speaking of Dorothea, I want now to present the book that she did with her husband, Paul Schuster Taylor, *An American Exodus: A Record of Human Erosion*.²⁴ This book was written in the Depression. The photographs were taken for the United States Government, the Farm Security Administration Historical Project, headed by Roy Stryker, to put on record the plight of the migratory workers and other displaced rural workers. In producing this book, photographs taken for the

FSA were used, accompanied in a very vivid way by words spoken by the people that Dorothea photographed. Let us look at a slide of the jalopies in which the people, whose fertile land had been blown away, drove to California, seeking some way to make a living. After editorial comment, these are the words of the characters that they met:

DESTINATION UNKNOWN—1939

Tens of thousands, across the country, hundreds of miles, up and down from valley to valley, crop to crop, ranch to ranch.

“People has got to stop somewhere.
Even a bird has got a nest.”

“We just make enough for beans, and when
we have to buy gas it comes out of the beans.”

“What bothers us travellin’ people most
is we cain’t get no place to stay still.”

Note that the words reinforce the photograph, not describe it—and also that the photograph gives a special meaning to the words. Captions in our illustrated magazines are often merely descriptive, telling us what to look at, and are therefore redundant. Sometimes you hardly need to glance at the picture at all to grasp the message of the editor.

Now we come to Dorothea Lange’s contemporary, Walker Evans, who produced with James Agee another classic, and I am proud to say this is from a Boston publishing house, *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*.²⁵ This again came out of the Farm Security Administration. The book, in a most unconventional way, opens with photographs. I’ll show you two spreads. Agee and Walker Evans were commissioned by *Fortune* magazine to go to the south, Alabama, and to photograph three tenant families for an article. They lived with these families,

they paid board, they became close friends. In the introduction there is a clutch of photographs. We see on the left the kitchen, and on the right is the youngest having a nap, with a veil over him to keep out the flies. And the next pair of pictures which we see are of the family and their kitchen. Perhaps one can express surprise that the picture editor bled the photographs right into the gutter so that we can’t open the book and appreciate each photograph separately. But this was a shocking book, with twenty-four to thirty photographs, with no captions whatsoever—no explanation of any kind in the front of the book, even in front of the title page. And there is only a slight reference to photographs in the text. Agee does state that the text and the pictures are co-equal yet independent.

The use of photographs *plus* words is a development comparatively recent. *Time in New England*²⁶ was produced by Nancy Newhall and Paul Strand and appeared in 1950. Paul Strand had been given a one-man exhibition at The Museum of Modern Art, New York, and was lunching with Nancy, who had hung the exhibition and created the exhibition with Paul. He said he would like to do something with his New England photographs but he didn’t know exactly how to go about it, nor what text to use. Nancy said, “Why not the New Englanders themselves?” and volunteered to edit the text. What she thought would take three months took two and a half years, and the book they produced has become a classic and, I am very happy to say, has now been reprinted by Aperture, Inc. with handsome typography and reproductions.

I would like to show you two examples of how photographs are used there. This is Paul’s strong photograph of a New England meeting house. Nancy had found in the Boston



XXIII Paul Strand. *Sea-worn Driftwood*, 1929

Athenaeum a statement by James Otis, before the Revolution, in 1764:

These are their bounds, which by God and Nature are fixed. Hitherto have they a right to come, and no further.

1. To govern by stated laws.
2. Those laws should have no other end ultimately but the good of the people.
3. Taxes are not to be laid on the people but by their consent in person or by deputation.
4. Their whole power is not transferable.

These are the first principles of law and justice, and the great barriers of a free state, and of the British constitution in particular. I ask, I want no more.

Now let it be shown how 'tis reconcilable with these fundamental maxims of the British constitution that all the northern colonies, who are without one representative in the House of Commons, should be taxed by the British parliament.

That the colonists, black and white, born here, are free-born British subjects, and entitled to all the essential civil rights of such, is a truth not only manifest from the provincial charters, from the principles of the common law, and acts of parliament, but from the British constitution, which professed to secure the liberties of all the subjects to all generations.

James Otis
*The Rights of the British Colonies
Asserted and Proved* (Boston, 1764)

This is not an illustration of this speech; this speech did not necessarily take place in this town hall; but it is the union of the image and the spirit of the text.

The next slide is even more extraordinary. It is one of Paul Strand's early photographs of driftwood in Maine (Plate XXIII), and with that is a speech given by Captain Ahab in *Moby Dick*.

All visible objects, man, are but as pasteboard masks. But in each event—in the living act, the undoubted deed—there, some unknown but still reasoning thing puts forth the mouldings of its features from behind the unreasoning mask. If man will strike, strike through the mask! How can the prisoner reach outside except by thrusting through the wall? To me, the white whale is that wall, shoved near to me. Sometimes I think there's naught beyond. But 'tis enough. He tasks me; he heaps me; I see in him outrageous strength, with an inscrutable malice sinewing it. That inscrutable thing is chiefly what I hate; and be the white whale agent, or be the white whale principal, I will wreak that hate upon him. Talk not to me of blasphemy, man; I'd strike the sun if it insulted me.

Herman Melville

Ahab to Starbuck, *Moby Dick, or the Whale*,
New York, Harper & Brothers, 1851

Then Paul Strand took up residence in France and with the writer Claude Roy did this book, *La France de profil*²⁷ (you can't translate it simply as *Profile of France*; it is rather *France in Spirit*).

The photographer and the writer worked in common in a rather different way. Here is a café scene in a small town, and the poet has hand-written chit-chat interrupted by news clippings of the kinds of gossip they might be talking about at the time. Or, to take another page, there's a poem about the cat. "Dust off your feet, little cat, before you go through the doorway, you're always welcome," and so on. Very charming, it goes opposite another photograph of a doorway in a very ancient building. Then here is this strong picture of a Breton peasant, and then finally, we come to this angry young man, one of Paul Strand's more powerful pictures, and underneath it says, "When the French get angry, they really get angry."



XXIV Ansel Adams. *Mt. McKinley and Wonder Lake . . .*

Finally, I want to show you in my list the beautiful book produced by Ansel Adams and Nancy Newhall called *This Is the American Earth*,²⁵ published in San Francisco by the Sierra Club in 1960. It is a book that was written as a warning, as a challenge, as a hope, to the American people that this land could be saved from the utter destruction threatened by carelessness and by misunderstanding of the land. The book is in several parts; I am going to show you only one of the last three photographs (Plate XXIV), and read to you the poetry of Nancy. She has built up the problem of ecology. She has brought a promise that in nature we could find a great satisfaction. And she now winds up the book about what it is like to experience the wilderness.

You shall face immortal challenges; you shall dare,
delighting, to pit your skill, courage, and wisdom
against colossal facts.
You shall live lifted up in light;
You shall move among clouds.

You shall see storms arise, and, drenched and deafened,
shall exult in them.
You shall top a rise and behold creation.
And you shall need the tongues of angels
to tell what you have seen.
Were all learning lost, all music stilled,
Man, if these resources still remained to him,
could again hear singing in himself
and rebuild anew the habitations of his thought.
Tenderly now,
let all men
turn to the earth.

I have tried to show you that the photograph can be used in books in so many different ways, for information and for inspiration, prosaically and poetically. To me it is one of the great uses of photography.

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- 3 Du Camp, Maxime. *Egypte, Nubie, Palestine et Syrie*. Paris: Gide et J. Baudry, 1852.
- 4 Root, Marcus Aurelius. *The Camera and the Pencil; or, The Heliographic Art*. Philadelphia: M. A. Root [and] J. B. Lippincott & Co.; New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1864.
- 5 Gardner, Alexander. *Gardner's Photographic Sketch Book of the War*. Washington: Philp & Solomons, 1865-66. 2 vols.
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- 8 Stillman, William James. *The Acropolis of Athens*. London: F. S. Ellis, 1870.
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Elephant folio! (24 by 19 inches). Despite the title page, the photographs were taken, not by Bradford, but by John B. Dunmore and George B. Critcherson.
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